

Ms. Smith has lived in the City of Gloucester City since 1963. Throughout the time since then, she has proven to be a tireless advocate for veterans, children, those less fortunate and animals.

For the past twenty-eight years, Ms. Smith has been the Secretary to the Gloucester City Board of Health. She worked for a decade at the Camden County, New Jersey Clerk's Office until she retired at the age of 82.

She formed the Heroes to Hero Run and Memorial Scholarship Event in honor of our fallen soldiers, and remains actively involved in that yearly event. She is an active member of the local Democratic Committee's Executive Board and attends monthly meetings and volunteer activities.

Ms. Smith works actively with the City of Gloucester City's Rabies Clinic, and volunteers to help staff the events in the City and she regularly volunteers her time for the City's Red Cross Blood Drive. She volunteers at the local Ronald McDonald House, at the Larc School for disabled children, and helps to collect school supplies and winter clothing items for local school children.

With all of her volunteer efforts, Ms. Smith remains a proud Grandmother to Velann Tomlin and is fixture in the lives of her Great Grandchildren, Luke and Mersadie.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Smith continues to encourage and inspire everyone who knows her and those she continues to meet. I hope that you will all join me in thanking her for all she has done and will continue to do for her friends, family and neighbors.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE  
HONORABLE A. WALLACE CATO

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 8, 2016*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to extend my personal congratulations and best wishes to an exceptional public servant and outstanding leader, Chief Judge Anthony Wallace Cato, on the occasion of his retirement from the South Georgia Judicial Circuit in Bainbridge, Georgia.

A. Wallace Cato was born on February 6, 1938 in Decatur County, Georgia to the late John Ebb Cato and Edna Stegall Cato. A Georgia man through and through, he has lived in Bainbridge his entire life. He attended the University of Georgia and graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1960 and a law degree in 1964.

In 1966, he was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives but he resigned in November 1969 to take office as District Attorney for the South Georgia Judicial Circuit. He served as District Attorney, prosecuting crimes in Southwest Georgia, until 1978.

Judge Cato resigned as District Attorney in 1978 and was appointed as Superior Court Judge for the South Georgia Judicial Circuit in a newly added seat. He served as Judge under Chief Judge Robert Culpepper, Jr. until December 15, 1982 when Judge Culpepper retired. At that time, Judge Cato became Chief Judge and he has maintained that position since.

Chief Judge Cato was a member of the Council of Superior Court Judges and served as Secretary and Treasurer in 1983–1984 under President Judge Emory Findley. Chief Judge Cato succeeded Judge Findley as the President of the Council in 1984–1985.

Chief Judge Cato also served as an Administrative Judge of the Second Judicial Administrative District for two terms: 1986 through 1988 and 2002 through 2006. As Administrative Judge, he served on the Executive Committee of the Council during these time periods.

Throughout his career, Chief Judge Cato has been recognized for his commitment and leadership on the bench. This year, he received the 5th Annual Emory Findley Award for Outstanding Judicial Service from the Council of Superior Court Judges. Always a mentor to those around him, Chief Judge Cato possesses the rare quality of humble leadership.

After retirement, Chief Judge Cato will enjoy spending time with his wife, Sadie; their three children, Karen, Wally, and Nancy; and six grandchildren. Chief Judge Cato has accomplished much in his life, but none of it would be possible without the love and support of the family he cherishes so dearly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our sincerest appreciation and best wishes to the Honorable A. Wallace Cato upon the occasion of his retirement from an outstanding career spanning 38 years as a Judge for the South Georgia Judicial Circuit.

DAN EVANS OLYMPIC  
WILDERNESS ACT

**HON. DAVID G. REICHERT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 8, 2016*

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, my home state of Washington and the region I represent are known for their breathtaking natural treasures.

Visitors from around the world come to take in the view of Mt. Rainier and hike the beautiful trails in the North Cascades.

But we cannot talk about Washington's natural treasures without thanking the man who's been instrumental in maintaining and protecting them for future generations.

Former Washington governor and U.S. Senator, Dan Evans, had an unwavering commitment to preserving our state's national parks and forests throughout his distinguished 50 years as a public servant.

From the 1984 Washington Wilderness Act to the Washington Park Wilderness Act of 1988, Senator Evans' initiatives have had a lasting impact on every person who had or will get the opportunity to experience Mother Nature's gifts.

It is only fitting that the name of the Olympic National Park Wilderness recognizes the efforts of the man who fought so hard to preserve it.

As someone who remembers the excitement of exploring our national forests as a kid, it has been one of my greatest pleasures as a father—and now as a grandfather—to pass the experience on to new generations.

Senator Evans understood this. He understood that even man's greatest feats of architecture could not compare to the magnificence Mt. Rainier's over 14,000 foot summit or the hidden pristine lakes in the North Cascades. He understood we only have one chance to protect these gifts.

And as a Republican from Washington State, he showed us that conservation did not have to be a partisan issue. It is a duty that falls on all of us, regardless of party or region.

Senator Evans deserves to be recognized for the contributions he made to my home state and to our country. I ask my colleagues in the House to please join me in supporting the Daniel J. Evans Olympic National Park Wilderness Act.

TRIBUTE TO SCOTT AUWATER

**HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 8, 2016*

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and admiration that I stand before you today to honor Mr. Scott Auwater for his many years of selfless and compassionate service to the African community, and all of our community's residents.

Scott Auwater became BronxWorks' Assistant Executive Director for Case Management Programs in 2002 after serving as a department director for seven years. He is an alumnus of the State University of New York at Cortland and has a Master's degree from the Hunter College School of Social Work. After graduating from college, he served for two years in the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone. Scott first joined BronxWorks as a student intern in 1986 and has been a full-time staff member since 1988.

His portfolio includes BronxWorks' street homeless services, family shelters, HIV/AIDS services, and foster care prevention programs. Scott established the BronxWorks Homeless Outreach Team, led BronxWorks' expansion into the homeless services programs, and he is widely recognized as an expert on homelessness. He oversaw BronxWorks' role in dramatically reducing street homelessness in the borough and has done innovative work in addressing the health needs of chronically homeless individuals.

Scott has served on a number of not-for-profit boards over the years including The Bronx Borough President's African Advisory Board and Throup Family Residence, a Bronx faith-based organization that shelters families and provides permanent supportive housing. Scott is married to Luz Real and has four children. In the years since his Peace Corps service ended, Scott has kept in close contact with his network of friends in Sierra Leone and returned to the country twice. Scott and Luz's youngest son, Hassan, was born in Sierra Leone during the country's brutal civil war and Hassan was adopted after his birth parents were killed during the war.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Mr. Scott Auwater for his consistently remarkable dedication to public service.

REP. CORRINE BROWN, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 114TH CONGRESS

## HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 8, 2016*

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, U.S. Representative CORRINE BROWN, has been a member of the House Veterans Committee for 23 years becoming its Ranking Member at the beginning of the 114th Congress. Because of my long tenure my work in key policy areas bridges from one Congress to the next. With that said, here are a few highlights of my accomplishments in the 114th Congress:

### RESTRUCTURING THE VA BUDGET

I sponsored the Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act, H.R. 216, which restructures the VA's budget based on how much it costs to deliver services to veterans. It sets down the requirements for knowing what their needs are and then draws up a budget that will meet those needs.

In its present form, the Department of Veterans Affairs budget process does not provide sufficient information on not only current resource requirements, but also future funding needs. To improve the budget formulation process and by extension, the Committee's understanding of the Departments goals and the resources needed to meet those goals H.R. 216 reforms the manner in which the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determines, plans for, and delivers health care, benefits and services, by requiring the VA to periodically review and assess veterans' needs, identify a plan of action to meet these changing needs, and align its resource requirements with its current, and future, operations.

H.R. 216 passed the House on March 24, 2016 by a vote of 420-0, and awaits action in the Senate.

### CLEARING LOGJAMS IN HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION

Funding caps, contractor lawsuits and design changes have delayed and even threatened the opening of new VA medical facilities.

By consistently concentrating on getting hospitals open I helped the Veterans Committee bypass the partisan infighting and legislative stalemates that threatened to shutter new construction projects. I led the effort to garner support among the Democratic Caucus for down-to-the-wire emergency funding necessary to finish new construction projects, while at the same time, working in close coordination with VA Secretary McDonald and the Chairman of the House Veterans Committee to provide necessary assurances that those at the VA responsible for malfeasance in new hospital construction would be held accountable. The funding passed the House September 30, 2015 as part of an omnibus bill to continue to fund the government after a previous continuing resolution expired.

### CHOICE PROGRAM

Veterans cite access to health care, both physical and mental care, as their most important benefit. The Veterans Choice program was enacted by the 113th Congress as a temporary program in the wake of the wait time scandal that was endemic across the VA in 2014. In the first full year after enactment, VA made 1.6 million more appointments than it did the year before. Though she was not the Ranking Member of the Vet-

erans Committee at the time of enactment, she was a conferee and participated fully in the negotiations that led to the program's inception.

Since I became the Ranking Member, VA has proposed following the current Choice program with a more permanent program and has presented the Committee with a long-term strategy for consolidation of community care programs.

One of the essential elements is that the plan streamlines eligibility requirements for veterans to receive increased access to care in their communities from non-VA providers. The goals of the new Choice program include making access to community care easier to understand, improving the veterans' experience, clarifying the program for VA staff, and make it easier for community providers to partner with VA, provide seamless connections between VA and community providers and apply best practices from the private sector.

I have taken a leadership role in three key areas to help in the implementation of the new program:

1. Encouraging veterans to sign up for care. In opening statements before Full Committee hearings and repeatedly in public forums at home and in Washington, I have expressed frustration that too many veterans don't sign up for the VA care they are entitled to. In order to overcome any doubts about the quality of care veterans may have after the drumbeat of negative news about the VA after the wait time scandals in 2013, I counter the negative images summarizing survey figures indicating that once they are in the system and receiving care, veterans are extremely satisfied with the quality of that care.

2. Recognizing that there were implementation problems and that unusually close coordination between Congress and the VA would cut through them faster, I called meetings with Democratic House Members and VA Secretary Robert McDonald to allow members to air concerns, prioritize changes that needed to be made, and determine whether legislation would be needed to fix the problems.

3. The absence of a workable provider agreement proved to be a major logjam in the delivery of Choice Program care. Upon discovering this, I led an effort among House Committee members to put in place a simple two-page provider agreement so more private care doctors could begin delivering services to veterans and be paid in a timely manner.

### OPIOIDS

Opioid abuse is a rampant problem which cuts across all socioeconomic classes. Recognizing that wounded veterans are at risk for the over prescription of opioids for pain treatment, I advocated for VA to initiate a program of ensuring alternative treatment techniques. In May, 2016, the House passed a bipartisan package of bills to battle America's growing epidemic of painkiller abuse and heroin addiction focusing on opioid addiction, treatment and prevention. An important element was the PROMISE Act, which will help improve VA opioid safety, and provide Veterans with safe, personalized care to deal with their physical and invisible wounds including using alternative treatment techniques. From the beginning, the PROMISE Act is a bipartisan bill. It is currently being conferenced with similar legislation which passed the Senate.

### WOMEN VETERANS

I introduced H.R. 1575, which makes permanent a highly successful pilot program to provide counseling in retreat settings for women veterans newly separated from service in the Armed Forces. Women veterans

transitioning from active duty experience readjustment issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), military sexual trauma, substance abuse, and homelessness similar to their male counterparts, yet there are indications that military service may affect women differently than men. Research has shown that women exposed to stressful situations like combat or military sexual trauma react differently than their male counterparts, and female veterans commit suicide at nearly six times the rate of other women.

Ensuring that VA is properly addressing the unique needs of women veterans is an essential component of the Committee's oversight efforts. During the 111th Congress, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-163, 124 Stat. 1130) required VA to conduct, through the Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Center Program (RCS), a pilot program to evaluate the feasibility and advisability of providing reintegration and readjustment services in group retreat settings to women veterans recently separated from service in the Armed Forces after a prolonged deployment. The pilot program ran for two years. Evaluation data was gathered pre-retreat, immediately post-retreat, and 2-month post-retreat. Written feedback from the veteran participants immediately after the retreats was unanimously positive for both years and RCS received several letters from participants expressing their gratitude for the opportunity. More importantly, the majority of the women veterans who participated in the retreats showed improvements in their psychological well-being, decreased stress symptoms, improved stress coping skills, and a reduction in the severity of their PTSD symptoms immediately both following the retreat and 2-months post retreat. H.R. 1575 was reported to the House by the Veterans Committee on November 2, 2015, and awaits consideration on the House Floor.

I cosponsored H.R. 1948, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act, sponsored by Rep. Julia Brownley, Ranking Member of the Health Subcommittee. It expands and makes permanent a successful pilot which provides drop off child care services for veterans with appointments at a VA medical center. Studies of the four original sites in the pilot showed that the program is extremely popular with veterans, particularly veterans who are grandparents. The program also proved to have been effective in reducing "no show" appointments at VA.

### HOMELESS VETERANS

I sponsored H.R. 5407, the Homeless Veterans with Children Reintegration Act. It directs the Secretary of Labor to put homeless veterans with dependent children at the top of the list to receive services through the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP). This program provides grants to local workforce boards, non-profits, and community and faith-based organizations to help homeless veterans find jobs.

HVRP is one of the few nationwide federal programs focusing exclusively on helping homeless veterans reintegrate into the workforce. By making veterans with children the priority to receive the temporary housing and the wrap-around services necessary to support a single working parent with children, it is my hope that vulnerable families will stabilize, move on to permanent housing and employment, and one-by-one, never be forced to spend another night in an unsafe environment. The bill would also require DOL to study access to shelter, safety and other relevant services for homeless veterans with dependent children. This information would help us understand the problem and identify opportunities to resolve issues facing homeless veterans with children. A hearing was held on June 23 in the Committee on